

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2009 National Wetland Program Development Grants

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OWOW-09-02

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.462

Dates: Hard copy proposals must be received by EPA (See Sections IV and VII of this RFP) by **7:00 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) July 15, 2009**. Proposals submitted electronically via e-mail must be received by **7:00 P.M. EDT July 15, 2009**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII before **July 10, 2009**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/>.

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final application(s) will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal(s) has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

Note to Applicants: If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) in your proposal to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in Section I.L.C CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS.

SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants for projects that support and build state/tribal/local government wetland programs. Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) must be used by applicants to address one or more of the five National Priority Areas described in Section I.C. The five National Priority Areas of the WPDG program are: 1) State/Tribal Technical and Meeting Support; 2) Regulation; 3) Monitoring and Assessment; 4) Voluntary Restoration/Protection; and 5) Water Quality Standards for Wetlands.

Awards made under this announcement will support the Agency's Strategic Plan, Goal 4: Restore and Protect Ecosystems, Objective 4.3: Restore and Protect Ecosystems, Sub-Objective 4.3.1: Increase Wetlands of the EPA Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>).

Non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs are eligible to apply under this announcement. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. Interstate agencies must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504. The term "interstate agency" is defined in Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 502 as "an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator." Intertribal consortia must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504 (<http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/search/40cfr.html>). This section states that an intertribal consortium is eligible to receive grants only if the consortium demonstrates that all members of the consortium meet the eligibility requirements for the grant and authorize the consortium to apply for and

receive assistance. An intertribal consortium must submit to EPA adequate documentation of: (1) the existence of the partnership between Indian Tribal governments, and (2) authorization of the consortium by all its members to apply for and receive the grant(s) for which the consortium has applied.

All projects submitted for this competition must involve and/or otherwise benefit two or more states and/or tribes or be nationwide in scope. **Individual States, tribes, and local government agencies are not eligible to apply under this announcement. Implementation projects are not eligible under this announcement.**

The total amount of expected federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$550,000, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that approximately four to ten awards will be made under this announcement. It is anticipated that the federal portion of the awards will range from \$25,000 to \$225,000, depending upon the amount requested and the overall size and need for the project.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The goals of EPA's Wetlands Program include increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands in the United States by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition. In pursuing these goals, EPA seeks to build the capacity of all levels of government to develop and implement effective, comprehensive programs for wetland protection and management. This announcement seeks proposals from eligible applicants that will help to support and build state/tribal/local government wetland programs. WPDGs must be used by applicants to address one or more of the following five National Priority Areas: 1) State/Tribal Technical and Meeting Support; 2) Regulation; 3) Monitoring and Assessment; 4) Voluntary Restoration/Protection; and 5) Water Quality Standards for Wetlands. Funds awarded under this announcement for National Priority Area 1: State/Tribal Technical and Meeting Support and National Priority Area 3: Monitoring and Assessment may be used by recipients to promote participation and to support the travel expenses of non-federal personnel.

The statutory authority for WPDGs is Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of these assistance agreements to improving wetland programs by: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, and project results must be disseminated to a broader audience so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project.

B. NATIONAL PRIORITY AREAS

This announcement is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to help support state/tribes/local governments in developing wetland programs by addressing one or more of the following five National Priority Areas: 1) State/Tribal Technical and Meeting Support; 2) Regulation; 3) Monitoring and Assessment; 4) Voluntary Restoration/Protection; and 5) Water Quality Standards for Wetlands. The National Priority Areas are based on the *Core Elements of an Effective State Tribal Wetlands Program Framework*. While the *Framework* was not specifically developed for use by local governments; EPA expects many aspects of the core elements framework will be applicable to local government wetland program development. For greater detail on the suite of activities that comprise each of the four core elements, refer to the Wetlands Core Elements Framework at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/initiative/estp.html>.

1. STATE/TRIBAL TECHNICAL AND MEETING SUPPORT

EPA is soliciting capacity building proposals from applicants to: 1) develop and provide technical training (face-to-face, web-based, and/or train-the-trainer); 2) provide facilitation/collaboration support for roundtables or work group meetings; 3) provide support for clearinghouses or informational centers; and/or 4) provide outreach/education services to state/tribal wetland programs on a wide variety of wetland topics. All capacity building projects will provide a forum for programmatic and technical aspects of state/tribal wetland programs.

EPA is soliciting proposals with either a national scope (i.e., serving all states and/or tribes on a nationwide basis) or with a specific geographic scope (i.e., two or more states and/or tribes). Proposals submitted should target state/tribal program officials, staff, and other interested stakeholders and address state/tribal wetland program building while producing environmental outputs and outcomes (wetland acreage or condition gains). These capacity building proposals should help states/tribes examine wetland related problems (e.g., wetland loss of acreage or function, public perception of the value of wetland, and management of wetland resources) and program development needs (wetland regulation, monitoring/assessment, voluntary restoration/protection, water quality standards); and develop solutions to wetland related problems by creatively applying the full array of available planning, technical, outreach/education, and financial tools. This priority promotes building state/tribal wetland programs by helping states/tribes become effective, results-oriented, and self-sustaining.

Assistance funds may be used by the successful applicant to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees at training sessions, roundtables, or work group meetings. The applicant will select meeting locations, secure meeting facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), and develop meeting agendas and materials. The successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides; EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the meetings. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

Examples of projects which could help build state/tribal wetland programs under the State/Tribal Technical and Meeting Support National Priority Area are:

- Projects that establish regional roundtables or support work group meetings for state/tribes.
- Projects that promote educational programs for state/tribal decision-makers.
- Projects that develop or expand train-the-trainer programs, serving as leadership coaches, supporting wholesale dissemination and use of existing wetlands tools (including EPA tools).
- Projects that serve as a clearinghouse for information and communication needs among states/tribes including webinar and online media support.

2. REGULATION (ENHANCING WETLAND PROTECTION)

State/tribal/local government regulatory programs are generally organized around one or more of the following five approaches: the use of CWA Section 401 Certification process; the development of statewide programmatic general permits; the assumption of CWA Section 404 program by states or tribes; development of a state/tribal wetland permitting program; and the promulgation of wetland/aquatic resource protection ordinances or laws. Eligible applicants can help develop or strengthen any aspect of any one or more of the five approaches a state/tribe/local government may have chosen or may be considering to protect wetlands.

EPA recognizes that the development of a regulatory program can begin with either non-regulatory or regulatory activities. However, any non-regulatory activity under this priority should be connected to building or strengthening wetland protection through regulation.

Applicants can submit proposals on any aspect of developing a wetland regulatory/protection program. Additional information is provided below on two aspects of wetlands protection/regulation – improving the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation and refining the protection of vulnerable wetlands and aquatic resources.

a) Improving the Effectiveness of Compensatory Mitigation

Projects that improve state/tribal/local government capacity to ensure ecologically effective compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to aquatic resources under the federal CWA Section 404/401 program or state/tribal/local government regulatory programs either by entities that have assumed the CWA 404 program, have a similar permit system, or are permitted by the federal agencies, are encouraged.

On April 10, 2008, EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) issued revised regulations governing compensatory mitigation for authorized impacts to wetlands, streams, and other waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. These regulations are designed to improve the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation to replace lost aquatic resource functions and area, expand public participation in compensatory mitigation decision making, and increase the efficiency and predictability of the mitigation project review process. Links to the final rule and supporting materials can be found below. These primary themes of the final rule convey the major areas of interest regarding mitigation that are being supported by the federal agencies. A copy of the rule and related documents can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/wetlandsmitigation/>.

Background information describing concepts and methods for improving the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation can be found in a National Academy of Science publication entitled “Compensating for Wetland Losses under the Clean Water Act.” The document can be found at <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309074320/html/>.

WPDG funds can only be used for research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies to support, improve, or develop mitigation programs; specifically, funds cannot be used for implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs.

b) Refining the Protection of Vulnerable Wetlands and Aquatic Resources

While all wetlands provide important ecological functions on a watershed and landscape scale, some are more vulnerable to impacts or loss than others. For example, geographically isolated wetlands and other waters may be particularly at risk due to recent changes in the legal landscape surrounding the CWA. These waters may be at risk for impacts from activities resulting in a discharge of dredged or fill material, as well as indirect impacts. Information regarding this issue, including studies addressing geographically isolated wetlands can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/guidance/CWAwaters.html>.

Examples of projects which could help build state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Regulation National Priority Area are:

- Projects to inventory and evaluate current practices utilized by federal, state, and tribal aquatic resource regulatory programs to effectively avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources.
- Projects to provide technical assistance and training to specific stakeholders on the 404 permitting process, including threshold data requirements for providing adequate Sequencing and Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternatives information in watershed plan/master plans as well as the permitting process. Examples of key target audiences are planners and local governments.
- Projects for research/studies to support the development of effective ecological performance standards for compensatory mitigation sites.

- Projects that develop and verify assessment methods for compensatory mitigation sites.
- Projects to evaluate the ecological performance of wetland/stream compensatory mitigation banks.
- Projects that develop tracking (reporting) systems that document: the technical adequacy of compensatory mitigation project plans (e.g., plan review standards); the ecological suitability of proposed compensatory mitigation project sites, taking into account a watershed context; the compliance of mitigation projects at various stages of implementation including long-term mitigation site management (perpetual stewardship); and the adequacy of compensatory mitigation for managing cumulative wetland impacts under the federal CWA Section 404/401 program.
- Projects to improve the long-term stewardship of compensatory mitigation sites including training local land conservation organizations on the stewardship responsibilities of compensatory mitigation sites, and training states, tribes, local governments and local conservation organizations on the best methods for developing long-term management plans and estimating the long-term management costs for compensatory mitigation sites.
- Projects to inventory and evaluate the types and functions of wetlands within a state/tribe/local government that may no longer be fully covered by the CWA.
- Projects to evaluate how states/tribes/local governments with vulnerable wetland types are currently addressing or planning to address potential gaps in federal protection.
- Projects to develop or take an inventory of targeted outreach programs aimed at major stakeholders regarding the benefits of protecting vulnerable wetland types.
- Projects to incorporate wetland issues into broader watershed planning and watershed management goals and to reflect on the contribution of vulnerable waters to the broader aquatic ecosystem.
- Projects to survey vulnerable wetland types in order to identify potential opportunities to protect them through land acquisition, conservation easements, or tax incentive provisions.

3. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

EPA encourages proposals that support the development and exchange of information necessary for state/tribes/local governments to develop strategies to strengthen adoption of wetland monitoring and assessment programs (i.e., projects that build state/tribal/local government capacity to determine the causes, effects, and extent of pollution to wetland resources). Further description of the building blocks for a state/tribal/local government wetland monitoring and assessment program can be found in “Elements of a State/Tribal Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Program” at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/monitor/. This document recommends ten basic elements of a wetlands monitoring program, and serves as a tool to help determine whether a wetlands monitoring program meets the requirements of CWA 106(e)(1).

Applicants can submit proposals on any aspect of developing a wetland monitoring and assessment program. Additional information is provided below on four aspects of wetland monitoring, assessment, and mapping.

a) Wetland Monitoring Surveys

EPA encourages proposals that will develop and demonstrate the use of wetland monitoring surveys to evaluate and report trends in wetland area or condition for specific watersheds and other regional planning areas. Surveys can be conducted to help document the significance of especially vulnerable aquatic resources, including headwater streams and geographically isolated wetlands. Surveys also can be conducted to evaluate the cumulative effectiveness of wetland restoration projects and programs. These smaller scale demonstrations should be conducted in such a manner that the data can be used for larger scale assessments such as in a rotating basin design. Proposals should explain how resultant data

from the demonstration project will contribute to a broader understanding of wetland resources across two or more states, tribes or across the country.

Examples of case studies illustrating wetland monitoring and assessment methods can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/bawwg/case.html>. Many of the case studies listed on this website were funded by WPDGs. A number of common program development steps can be seen in those case studies. Many successful programs begin with the development of a reference wetland network in a selected watershed or region. Sampling information then is used to develop and test wetland monitoring methods. Those methods, in turn, are used to implement assessment projects that generate the information needed to manage and report aquatic resource condition in the selected watershed. Additional information related to wetland monitoring and assessment can be found at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/monitor.pdf and www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/devgrants.pdf.

b) Regionally-Based Wetland Assessment Data Analysis Centers

Many state and tribal programs, and regional consortiums of states and tribes, have identified data analysis as one of the most significant barriers to fully implementing wetland assessment projects. Data Analysis Centers can provide states and tribes valuable technical support, thereby enabling them to move forward with wetland assessment projects; building state and tribal capacity to collaborate in EPA's 2011 National Wetland Condition Assessment; and development of models to approach data analysis in a wetland assessment context. Organizations with demonstrated data analysis skills and that have demonstrated commitments, through letters of support, from at least two state or tribal governments to utilize these services are needed to provide support for these types of activities on a pilot basis to build capacity for state, tribal, and local government wetland assessment.

c) Facilitating a Regional Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Work Group

Many states and tribes have identified the need for regional collaboration and information sharing to help build their wetlands monitoring capacity. Regional Wetland Monitoring Work Groups in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions demonstrate how these types of organizations can benefit state and tribal wetlands monitoring programs. Current successful Monitoring and Assessment work group participants include states and tribes in the project area, universities, and may include local governments and relevant federal agencies. The theme of the work group could focus around: methods development; Rapid Assessment Method (RAM) training; using wetland assessment data to inform decision-making (ambient surveys and site-specific monitoring); the 2011 National Wetland Condition Assessment; watershed-scale wetlands monitoring and planning; and other topics as determined by state and tribal participants. Monitoring and assessment work groups should develop greater cross-jurisdictional collaboration among states and tribes, enhanced information sharing, and improved resource leveraging among participating states and tribes. Applicant's proposals should consider including the following tasks: coordination of work group meetings and calls; facilitation of work group meetings; and arranging travel accommodations for state and tribal governments to participate in Regional Wetland Monitoring and Assessment work group meetings. Assistance funds may be used by the successful applicant to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees at work group meetings. The applicant will select work group meeting locations, secure meeting facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), and develop meeting agendas and materials. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the meetings. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

d) Wetland Mapping Coalitions

EPA is emphasizing the need to fill gaps in wetland mapping and data collection to facilitate the development of wetland assessment programs and the other core elements of comprehensive state/tribal/local government wetland programs. Historically, wetland assessment efforts have been

impeded by the lack of up-to-date wetland inventory maps and the lack of a common set of indicators and metrics to ensure reporting consistency among the states/tribes/local governments. Accurate and up-to-date wetland spatial information is necessary to quantitatively measure gains in wetlands; develop monitoring and assessment programs; develop efficient and effective regulatory/mitigation/enforcement programs; assist in the siting of wetland mitigation using a watershed approach; and develop state, tribal, county and watershed-wide restoration plans. Accurate spatial data will also help to incorporate wetlands into state, tribal, and local level watershed planning efforts.

Many states and tribes have identified the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetland Inventory (NWI) as the best existing base map for monitoring wetland gains and losses. EPA supports projects that enable mapping of wetland areas at a more refined scale than the NWI such as: at 1:12,000 resolution; assign attributes for types of wetlands to locational data; and develop tools that facilitate the above efforts. A "National Wetland Mapping Standard" has recently been developed by a work group of the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC). This work group has provided a national standard for wetland mapping which must be used in all mapping projects that are funded through the federal government, and wetlands mapped using the standard can be uploaded to the NWI data base to refine the existing NWI data. Eligible applicants can take advantage of the development of this data standard by forming "Wetland Mapping Coalitions" to help co-fund regional (two or more states and/or tribes) mapping efforts that would otherwise be too costly for any one group to undertake. Successful mapping coalitions have had upwards of 50 members made up of all interested parties such as local, state, federal, non-governmental organizations and many others such as local utilities. These coalitions are most effectively structured to address both mapping and monitoring issues concurrently and thus should be developed in close collaboration with any existing or planned interagency monitoring work group. More information about the FGDC wetland mapping standard can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/nwi/fgdcwet.html>.

Inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands is considered implementation and is not eligible for funding under this competition. Projects will be eligible for funding when mapping activities are carried out as part of helping or informing development of a wetland program, for planning purposes, or as part of a demonstration project.

Examples of projects which could help build state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Monitoring and Assessment National Priority Area are:

- Projects to demonstrate how wetlands assessment data can be used to inform watershed planning decisions, including the use of assessment data to prioritize wetlands restoration.
- Projects to demonstrate how wetlands assessment methods and indicators can be used to develop mitigation performance standards that in turn can be incorporated into state water quality standards.
- Projects to create or disseminate information about new technologies that can provide states, tribes, and local governments with the capability to inventory and monitor wetlands with the least expense and staff time.
- Projects to develop on-line training and field tools for identifying hydrologic connections (such as aerial photography analysis, mapping).
- Projects to provide technical assistance and training to stakeholders on the importance of including wetland condition assessments in the watershed planning and master planning processes. Examples include developing approaches for local governments to identify stakeholders that have wetland monitoring data and/or data needs to assess the impacts of wetland permits on the water quality within their watershed.
- Projects to develop probabilistic survey designs.

- Projects that develop the use of reference wetland data to test and calibrate wetland assessment methods; use of data from reference sites and ambient surveys to classify levels of wetland disturbance relative to aquatic life use and other endpoints; use of data from reference sites and wetland surveys to develop wetland-specific indices of biological and/or hydrogeomorphic integrity; use of data from reference sites and wetland surveys to develop performance standards for wetland mitigation and restoration.
- Projects that develop Wetland Monitoring and Assessment regional work groups.
- Projects that pilot the ability of state/tribes/local governments to map or remap wetlands using the new National Wetland Mapping Standard or digitize the wetlands mapping information.
- Projects to map or remap wetlands to create watershed-based assessments of wetlands functions, health, and overall natural habitat integrity for use in watershed planning and development of watershed-based wetland conservation strategies.

4. VOLUNTARY RESTORATION/PROTECTION

State/tribal/local government wetland programs are encouraged to directly support voluntary wetland restoration and protection. Mitigation required under a regulatory program does not by itself fulfill this function created by prior wetland loss or decreases in wetland condition. A state/tribal/local government voluntary wetland restoration/protection program can serve a variety of functions including: providing direct funding of voluntary wetland restoration/protection projects located in that state or tribe; building an active voluntary wetland restoration/protection program on state or tribal owned lands; development of public outreach on the benefits of and opportunities for voluntary restoration/protection on private land; provisions for technical assistance or incentives for landowners or organizations to carry out voluntary wetland restoration/protection projects; research regarding effective wetland restoration/protection techniques; methods to measure the success of restoration activities; and training and capacity building for organizations interested in joining voluntary restoration/protection partnerships.

Examples of projects which could help build state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Voluntary Restoration/Protection National Priority Area are:

- Projects to demonstrate how wetlands data can be incorporated into watershed planning for wetlands protection, restoration, and improvement activities.
- Projects to develop and provide targeted outreach to specific key citizen or non-profit organizations on issues related to wetlands protection and restoration.
- Projects to develop and provide training for specific key citizen or non-profit organizations on the benefits of wetland restoration, protection, and improvement activities to help overcome barriers in carrying out these types of activities.
- Projects to protect/restore vulnerable wetlands through the creation of methods to identify areas that may be affected by climate change or areas that are likely to become wetlands due to climate change.
- Projects to develop processes/forums/mechanisms to enhance collaboration efforts with other parties including: land trust organizations, State Wildlife Agencies, local governments, agriculture agencies, etc. to share/integrate differing priorities and missions that will affect wetland voluntary restoration/protection (i.e., watershed plans, nonpoint source management plans, State Wildlife Action Plans, etc).
- Projects to develop or share tools or processes to identify areas with high restoration potential.

5. WATER QUALITY STANDARDS FOR WETLANDS

EPA encourages proposals that support the development and exchange of information necessary for state/tribes/local governments to develop or strengthen the adoption of wetland water quality standards. Wetlands water quality standards should contain the following components:

- a. Established and assigned designated uses (e.g., wetland-specific aquatic life use support);
- b. Use of biological assessment methods and biological criteria (narrative and numeric) for wetlands water quality assessment; and
- c. An anti-degradation policy.

Water quality standards are necessary to ensure that, under provisions of the CWA, wetlands are afforded the same level of protection as other waters. Water quality standards provide a programmatic basis for a variety of water quality management activities including, but not limited to, monitoring and assessment under CWA Section 305(b) and/or CWA Section 303(d), permitting under CWA Section 402 and CWA Section 404, water quality certification under CWA Section 401, and management of nonpoint source pollution under CWA Section 319.

Examples of projects which could help build state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Water Quality Standards for Wetlands National Priority Area are:

- Projects to demonstrate how wetlands assessment methods and indicators can be used to develop mitigation performance standards that in turn can be incorporated into state/tribal water quality standards.
- Projects to describe the state of the science for establishing water quality standards for wetlands.
- Projects to review and evaluate state experience in applying standards for flowing waters to wetlands.
- Projects to estimate the synergistic effects of constructed wetlands used in conjunction with the preservation and restoration of naturally occurring wetlands in meeting nonpoint source reduction goals in a watershed.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The WPDG program is linked to EPA's Strategic Plan (*2006-2011 Strategic Plan*). The WPDG Program supports EPA's strategic goals to improve and restore healthy ecosystems by increasing the quality and quantity of wetlands under EPA Strategic Plan Goal 4 (Healthy Communities and Ecosystem), Objective 4.3 (Restore and Protect Ecosystems), and Sub-Objective 4.3.1 (Increase Wetlands). To obtain more information on EPA's Strategic Plan go to: <http://www.epa.gov/ocfopage/plan/plan.htm>.

All proposed projects must address the Strategic Plan priorities and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goals of restoring and protecting healthy communities and ecosystems.

Environmental results are a way to gauge a project's performance and are described in terms of outputs and outcomes. Expected environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of anticipated outputs from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Development of criteria for assessing the condition of "at-risk" wetlands (qualitative – may be measured as whether criteria have been developed).
- Development of training materials and tools to help state/tribal/local government decision makers integrate wetland protection into watershed planning (quantitative – may be measured as number of tools developed or number of organizations receiving materials).
- Organization and administration of a conference or workshop to educate and train partners (e.g., workshop for local governments on ordinances to protect wetlands).

- Development of methods or criteria to assess the success of a mitigation site (qualitative – may be measured as whether methods developed).
- Development of methods to develop water quality standards (qualitative – may be measured by whether methods have been developed).
- Development of pilot restoration sites to demonstrate the effectiveness of a new restoration technique (qualitative – may be measured as whether new restoration technique has been tested, or quantitative – may be measured as acres restored or condition of demonstration site compared to reference conditions).
- Development and verification of assessment methods and/or tracking (reporting) systems (qualitative – whether tracking system was developed).

Environmental outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. In this context, an output could be the number of local officials receiving training on model ordinances to protect wetland resources. The environmental outcome would be the number of municipalities adopting ordinances or the acres of wetlands protected by these ordinances or ultimately a decrease in the number of degraded or destroyed wetlands.

As the above example illustrates, outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Increase in knowledge as demonstrated by pre- and post-training assessments;
- Increased understanding of a wetland's condition (may be measured in percent of sites meeting performance criteria or in determining the trend in wetland condition at a particular site or watershed);
- Improved wetland protection efforts (may be measured in percent of protection sites meeting performance criteria);
- Application of informed, scientifically valid approaches to watershed planning that will protect, prevent, and reduce pollution to wetlands and other aquatic resources (may be measured through the use of decision framework or model analysis);
- Increased understanding of how to ensure "no net loss" in quality and quantity of wetlands in the 404 regulatory program (assessment of wetland function and condition); and
- Increased quantity of wetlands (measured in acres).

Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of outputs and outcomes can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf> or <http://www.epa.gov/water/waterplan/documents/FY06NPGappendix-b.pdf>.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

EPA expects approximately \$550,000 in federal funding will be available under this announcement, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that approximately four to ten awards will be made under this announcement. EPA anticipates that the typical

federal portion of the awards for the selected projects will range from \$25,000 to \$225,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and need for the project. It is anticipated that awards under this announcement will have one to three year project periods. EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost (see Section III.B for information on the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match requirement).

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement, or make fewer awards than anticipated. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. TYPE OF FUNDING

It is anticipated that grants and cooperative agreements may be funded under this announcement. When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplan and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for projects selected may include:

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance.
2. Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work.
3. In accordance with 40 CFR 30 and 40 CFR 31.36(g), review of proposed procurements.
4. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient).
5. Review and comment on content of tasks/deliverables and reports/publications (printed or electronic) prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

C. CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS

1. Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards, acquire contract services, or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with

subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133 , and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

2. How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V of the announcement?

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- (i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.
- (ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs are eligible. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. Interstate agencies must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504. The term "interstate agency" is defined in CWA Section 502 as "an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator." Intertribal consortia must meet

the requirements of 40 CFR Part 35.504. This section states that an intertribal consortium is eligible to receive grants only if the consortium demonstrates that all members of the consortium meet the eligibility requirements for the grant and authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance. An intertribal consortium must submit to EPA adequate documentation of: (1) the existence of the partnership between Indian Tribal governments, and (2) authorization of the consortium by all its members to apply for and receive the grant(s) for which the consortium has applied.

Non-profit applicants may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a non-profit organization in OMB Circular A-122. Interstate organizations may be asked to provide a citation to the statutory authority, which establishes their status.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

All applicants must demonstrate in their proposal submission how they will contribute a minimum non-federal cost share/match of 25 percent of the total project costs (*total federal share and applicant cost share/match*) in accordance with 40 CFR 35.385, and 35.615. This means that EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost.

The cost share/match may be provided in cash or by in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions often include salaries, use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. Cost share/match must be for eligible and allowable project costs. Cost share/matching funds are considered grant funds and are included in the total award amount and must be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the workplan. All grant funds are subject to federal audit and are subject to the regulations governing cost share/matching fund requirements at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds (examples of funding restrictions are outlined in Section I.A and VI.E of this announcement) also apply to the use of cost share/matching funds. Other federal grants may not be used as cost share/match without specific statutory authority. Proposals which do not demonstrate how the applicant will meet the minimum 25 percent cost share/match requirement will not be considered for funding. The minimum cost share/match is determined by dividing the total project cost by four. EPA will use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Project Cost (\$)}}{4} = \text{minimum cost share/match (\$)}$$

For example, if the **total project cost** is \$100,000 in order to meet the 25 percent cost share/match requirement, the applicant must be able to provide \$25,000 in cash or in-kind contributions and would receive a maximum of \$75,000 in federal funds from EPA.

If an intertribal consortium includes its WPDG in an approved Performance Partnership Grant (PPG), the cost share/match requirement may be reduced to 5 percent of the allowable cost of the work plan budget for the first two years in which the intertribal consortium receives a PPG; after two years, the cost share/match may be increased up to 10 percent of the work plan budget (as determined by the Regional Administrator). Currently the Agency is finalizing a process to determine the percent cost share/match for tribal and intertribal consortium after the two year initial grant period. (See regulations at 40 CFR Part 35.536(c)).

Where the stated purpose is to include a WPDG into a PPG, an intertribal consortia may prepare a budget and proposed work plan based upon the assumption that EPA will approve the waiver amount for PPGs under 40 CFR 35.536. If a proposed PPG work plan differs significantly from the WPDG work plan approved for funding, the Regional Administrator must consult the National Program Office. (See 40 CFR 35.535). The purpose of this consultation requirement is to address the issue of ensuring that a

project which is awarded WPDG funding is implemented once commingled with other grant programs in a PPG.

If the intertribal consortium does not or cannot include the WPDG as part of an approved PPG, or chooses to withdraw the WPDG from their PPG, the intertribal consortium must then meet the cost share/match requirements identified above and, as applicable, negotiate a revised workplan with the EPA contact identified in Section VII.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

These are requirements that if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Except as stated below, proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. In addition, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal workplan, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. If a single spaced proposal workplan is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the double spaced page limit for proposals specified in Section IV. Excess pages will not be reviewed (Section IV establishes a 16 page double spaced proposal workplan page limit which would be the equivalent of 8 single spaced pages; any single spaced pages in excess of 8 will not be reviewed).
2. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A at the time of proposal submission.
3. Applicants must demonstrate that they can meet the cost share/match requirements in Section III.B of this announcement at the time of proposal submission.
4. Proposals must be for projects that improve wetland programs by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not a demonstration.
5. Proposals must address at least one of the National Priority Areas described in Section I.B (*i.e.*, *State/Tribal Technical and Meeting Support; Regulation; Monitoring and Assessment; Voluntary Restoration/Protection; and Water Quality Standards for Wetlands*).
6. All projects submitted for this competition must involve and/or otherwise benefit two or more states and/or tribes or be nationwide in scope.
7. Funds cannot be used for activities to implement a wetlands program or for the purchase of land or conservation easements. Funds cannot be used for inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands. Funds used for mapping wetlands must use the new "National Wetland Mapping Standard" developed by a work group of the FGDC and cannot be used for mapping of wetlands that do not use this standard. Funds cannot be used for implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs. If proposals are submitted that have these ineligible activities, proposals will not be considered for funding.
8. Proposals must be received by the EPA, as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their hard copy or e-mail proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.

9. Hard copy proposals must be submitted by hand delivery, express delivery service, or courier service. Electronic submission must be sent via e-mail to HQ-National-WPDG@epa.gov. **Hard copy proposals submitted by any type of regular U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.**
10. Proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling. For hard copy submissions, where Section IV requires proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Myra Price as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

D. PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Funds for a WPDG may be included in a PPG. A PPG enables entities to combine funds from more than one environmental program grant into a single grant with a single budget. Non-profit, non-governmental organizations are not eligible for PPGs. Under the WPDG program, interstate agency proposals must first be selected under the competitive grant process and, in accordance with 40 CFR 35.138, the workplan commitments that would have been included in the WPDG workplan must be included in the PPG workplan. Similarly, intertribal consortia proposals must first be selected under this competitive grant process and in accordance with 40 CFR 35.535. For further information, see the final rules on Environmental Program Grants for state, interstate, and local government agencies at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A and tribes at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart B. The rules are also available on EPA's website at: <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-TOX/2001/January/Day-09/t218.htm> (state) and at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-GENERAL/2001/January/Day-16/g219.htm> (tribal).

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGES

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF 424 and SF 424A, are available at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm and by mail upon request by calling the Grants Administration Division at (202) 564-5320.

B. FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants have the option to submit their proposals in **one** of two ways: 1) electronically via e-mail **or** 2) hard copy and compact disc (CD) by express delivery service, hand delivery, or courier service to the EPA contact identified in Section IV.B.2. **Proposals submitted by regular U.S. Postal Mail will not be considered.** EPA will not accept faxed submissions. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described in Section IV.C CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION below, regardless of mode of submission.

1. E-mail Submission

E-mail submissions must be submitted to HQ-National-WPDG@epa.gov and be received by the submission deadline stated in Section IV.E of this announcement. E-mail submissions should include “**FY09 National WPDG Proposal**” and the submitting **applicant's name** in the subject of the e-mail. All required documents listed in Section IV.C CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION of this announcement must be attached to the e-mail as separate Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files. Please note that if you choose to submit your proposal materials via e-mail, you are accepting all risks attendant to e-mail submission including server delays and transmission difficulties. E-mail submissions exceeding 15MB will experience transmission delays which will affect when they are received by the

Agency. For these size submissions, applicants should submit their proposal materials via hard copy or else they may be received late and not considered for funding. Applicants submitting their proposal materials through e-mail should confirm receipt of their materials with Myra Price as soon as possible after submission. Letters of support, annotated resumes, pictures and/or maps may need to be scanned so that they can be attached and submitted electronically. Pictures and/or maps may be included as separate files using .jpg or .tif format.

The address for e-mail submission is: HQ-National-WPDG@epa.gov

2. Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD) Submission

Two hard copies of all required documents listed in Section IV.C CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION, and an electronic version on a CD, are required to be sent by express delivery service, courier service, or hand delivered. Please mark all submissions: ATTN: **FY09 National WPDG Proposal**. The CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc.) Letters of support, annotated resumes, pictures and/or maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the CD. Pictures and/or maps may be included as separate files using .jpg or .tif format.

Proposals submitted by regular U.S. Postal Mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.

The address for hard copy submission is:

Attn: Myra Price
US EPA, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds
EPA West Building, Room 7231P
1301 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

C. CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very closely and address all requirements thoroughly. All proposal packages must include the following three documents described below:

1. Signed Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.
2. SF 424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs. In Section B: Budget Categories column (1) should be filled out for federal funds, column (2) should be filled out for non-federal cost-share/match, and column (5) should be filled out for total project cost (federal funds and non-federal cost share/match).
3. A proposal workplan that must be typewritten must include the information as described below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal.

NOTE: The workplan (including cover page) must be limited to no more than sixteen (16) double-sided typewritten 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of paper). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal. Additional pages beyond the 16 page limit will not be considered. Hard copy submissions must be submitted

double-sided. If a single-spaced proposal workplan is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 16 page double-spaced page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed (the 16 page double-spaced proposal workplan page limit would be the equivalent of 8 single-spaced pages; any single-spaced pages in excess of 8 will not be reviewed). Supporting materials (such as letters of support, maps/pictures, and annotated resumes) will not be considered within the page limit.

Workplan

1. **Cover Page** including:
 - a. Name of Applicant;
 - b. Project Title (the project title should reflect the main project outcome/objective and should be 15 words or less);
 - c. National Priority Area(s) from Section I.B (*i.e.*, *State/Tribal Technical and Meeting Support; Regulation; Monitoring and Assessment; Voluntary Restoration/Protection; and Water Quality Standards for Wetlands*) addressed in the proposal;
 - d. Key Personnel and Contact Information (*i.e.*, e-mail address and phone number);
 - e. Geographic Location (Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) level and name of the watershed, within which the project occurs if appropriate);
 - f. Total Project Cost (specify the amount of funding requested from EPA and the required cost share/match contribution in dollars); and
 - g. Abstract/Project Summary (the abstract should begin with one or two sentences describing the main objective of the proposal. It should also include a listing of the main tasks to be accomplished, and a description of the final product(s). The entire abstract should be 250 words or less).
2. **Project Description** containing:
 - a. Brief description of environmental issue(s) of concern (need for the project);
 - b. Project Goals and Objectives:
 - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan - List the Objective of the project and describe the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan, Goal 4, Objective 4.3, Sub-Objective 4.3.1 (see Section I.C of this announcement);
 - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project and an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.C of this announcement);
 - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of the project activities. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of workplan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement); and
 - iv. Established Baseline for Measurement - Describe what baseline will be used to determine whether the project resulted in environmental improvement (*i.e.*, current condition).

- c. Describe how the project will address one or more of the National Priority Areas identified in Section I.B (*i.e., State/Tribal Technical and Meeting Support; Regulation; Monitoring and Assessment; Voluntary Restoration/Protection; and Water Quality Standards for Wetlands*) of this announcement. Describe how the project activities support and build on state/tribe/local government wetland programs.
 - d. Describe how the project involves and/or benefits two or more states and/or tribes or is nationwide in scope.
 - e. Project Tasks - Outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals. Include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project.
 - f. Milestone Schedule – Provide a milestone schedule that covers each year of the total grant period request and provides a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks.
 - g. Describe how and with whom the applicant intends to partner (partnerships) and describe their roles and responsibilities in carrying out workplan components/tasks.
 - h. Provide a brief description of how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to state, tribal, and local governmental agencies and the public. Proposals must explain how information/results from a demonstration project will contribute to inform other projects or situations between other states, tribes, or nationwide.
 - i. Describe how the project will address if applicable:
 - i. Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QA/QC) issues if the applicant expects to collect data and information (see Section VIII). Note: Development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is required of all EPA assistance agreements that fund data collection and assessment. The cost of the QAPP development should be included in the project budget.
 - ii. The measures the applicant will put in place to control, prevent, and/or avoid the spread of invasive species (see Section VIII).
3. **Budget Narrative** – Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF 424A such as “other” and “contractual”. Total costs must include separate breakdowns for federal and cost share/matching (non-federal) components. Identify the required cost share/match in the budget and describe cost-effectiveness, reasonableness of costs, and value of in-kind contributions. Include any travel for applicant staff to attend wetland meetings throughout the proposed project period. If applicable, the budget narrative for the travel cost category must include travel reimbursement to pay for travel costs of non-federal personnel. Note that any proposed subgrants should be included in the “other” cost category of the SF 424A.
4. **Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/ Qualifications**
- a. Staff Expertise/Qualifications - Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their expertise/qualifications, knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (Annotated resumes are preferred but not required, should be provided as attachments, and are not counted in the page limit).

- b. Organizational Experience - Provide a brief description of the applicant's organizational experience related to the proposed project, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
- 5. **Past Performance** - Briefly describe federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than three such agreements and preferably EPA agreements) and:
 - a. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
 - b. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.
 - c. Describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

Note: For items a, b, and c above, if the applicant has prior EPA assistance agreement experience the proposal should discuss the prior EPA assistance agreements first; if you do not have prior EPA assistance agreement experience then you should submit information on assistance agreements funded by other federal agencies; if you have not previously received federal funds, you may provide a history of applicable past performance with private funding, or funding awarded by state, tribal, or local governments. Applicants should identify the agreements and a point of contact for each such agreement. If you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in the proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors. In evaluating applicants Past Performance the Agency will consider the information supplied by the applicant in its proposal, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files (e.g., Grantee Compliance Database) and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided the by applicant).

- 6. Any letters of support should specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist the project. (Not counted in the page limit).
- 7. Any pictures and/or maps. (Not counted in the page limit).

NOTE: The applicant should also provide in its workplan any additional information, to the extent not already identified above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.

D. MANAGEMENT FEES

When formulating budgets for proposals, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term

"management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

E. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy with CD must be **received** by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII by **7:00 P.M. EDT July 15, 2009**. Proposals submitted electronically via e-mail must be **received** by **7:00 P.M. EDT July 15, 2009**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

F. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark proposals or portions of proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure. However, competitive proposals are considered confidential and protected from disclosure prior to the completion of the competitive selection process.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

All eligible proposals, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights below (100 point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal package.

1) National Priority Area (20 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposed project addresses one or more of the National Priority Areas (<i>i.e., State/Tribal Technical and Meeting Support; Regulation; Monitoring and Assessment; Voluntary Restoration/Protection; and Water Quality Standards for Wetlands</i>) identified in Section I.B of this announcement. (20 points)
2) Environmental Results (20 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criterion: A. Extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates potential environmental results (<i>i.e., will the project result in the protection of wetland resources</i>), anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan. (10 points) B. Extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for tracking progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (10 points)
3) Specific Workplan Elements (25 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the following: A. A milestone schedule of activities for the project. (5 points) B. The reasonableness and cost-effectiveness of all costs in the budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. Total costs must include both federal and cost share/matching (non-federal) components. (5 points) C. That the project supports and builds on state/tribal/local government wetland programs. (5 points) D. A description of roles and responsibilities of the applicant in

	<p>carrying out the project. (5 points)</p> <p>E. A description of how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to state, tribal, and local governmental agencies and the public. (5 points)</p>
4) Project Partnerships) (10 points)	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate:</p> <p>A. How, why, and with whom the applicant intends to partner. (5 points)</p> <p>B. A description of roles and responsibilities any identified partners will have in carrying out the workplan components/tasks. (5 points)</p>
5) Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/ Qualifications (10 points)	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following sub-criterion:</p> <p>A. Organizational experience related to the proposed project and infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (5 points)</p> <p>B. Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (5 points).</p>
6) Past Performance (15 points)	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following sub-criterion:</p> <p>A. Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than three, and preferably EPA agreements) (4 points)</p> <p>B. History of meeting reporting requirements under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than three, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements. (3 points)</p> <p>C. Extent and quality to which the applicant documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federal and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) performed within the last three years (no more than three, and preferably EPA agreements), and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (8 points)</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under items A, B, and C above, the Agency will consider the information supplied by the applicant in its proposal, and may also consider relevant information from other sources</p>

	including Agency files (e.g., Grantee Compliance Database) and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided the by applicant). Applicants who have no relevant or available past performance information will receive a neutral score for the factor (for item A above 2 points, for item B above 1.5 points, and for item C above 4 points). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factors (i.e., zero points for item A, zero points for item B, and zero points for item C).
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B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals received by EPA in hard copy or received by EPA via e-mail by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel of EPA staff will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A and will develop a list of the most highly rated proposals to submit to the Selection Official. Final funding decisions will then be made by the Selection Official based on the review panel evaluations and may also take into account the following additional factors:

1. Geographic distribution of funds;
2. Diversity of projects; and
3. Availability of funds.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminary recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. An approvable final workplan narrative is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement.
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component.
3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment.
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with §35.115 of 40 CFR.
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments.

In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

A listing of successful proposals will be posted at the following website address <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/>. This website may also contain information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications (www.grants.gov will also contain information on any modifications to the announcement).

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The general award and administration process for all WPDGs is governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations), 40 CFR Part 31 (States, Tribes, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia and local governments), and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A (“Environmental Program Grants for State, Interstate, and Local Government Agencies”) and Subpart B (“Environmental Program Grants for Tribes”). These regulations can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/epacfr40/chapt-I.info/chi-toc.htm>.

C. NONPROFIT ADMINISTRATIVE CAPABILITY CLAUSE

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

D. DUNS NUMBER

Applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number with the full application for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the web site at www.dnb.com.

E. DISPUTE PROCEDURES

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>. Copies may also be requested by contacting the Agency contact in Section VII.

F. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

- This competitive grant program cannot fund payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property.
- Purchase of vehicles (including boats, motor homes) and office furniture is not eligible for funding under this program.
- Lease of a vehicle(s) may be permitted, but is contingent on justification of need in the workplan.
- Proposed project activities must comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

G. COPYRIGHTS

In accordance with 40 CFR 30.36 for institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations, or 40 CFR 31.34 for other recipients, EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes copyrighted works developed under a grant, subgrant or contract under a grant or subgrant. Examples of Federal purpose include but are not limited to: (1) Use by EPA and other Federal employees for official Government purposes; (2) Use by Federal contractors performing specific tasks for the Government; (3) Publication in EPA documents provided the document does not disclose trade secrets (e.g., software codes) and the work is properly attributed to the recipient through citation or otherwise; (4) Reproduction of documents for inclusion in Federal depositories; (5) Use by State, tribal and local

governments that carry out delegated Federal environmental programs as “co-regulators” or act as official partners with EPA to carry out a national environmental program within their jurisdiction; (6) Limited use by other grantees to carry out Federal grants provided the use is consistent with the terms of EPA’s authorization to the grantee to use the copyrighted material.

H. REPORTING

WPDGs are covered under the following EPA grant regulations: 40 CFR Part 30 (Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations); 40 CFR Part 31 (States, Tribes, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia and local governments); and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A (States, Interstate agencies and Local Governments) and Subpart B (Tribes and Intertribal consortia). These regulations specify basic grant reporting requirements; including performance and financial reports (see 40 CFR 30.51, 30.52, 31.40, 35.115, and 35.515). In negotiating these grants, EPA will work closely with recipients to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements into each grant agreement consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 31.40, 35.115, and 35.515. These regulations provide some flexibility in determining the appropriate content and frequency of performance reports. At a minimum, however, the reporting schedule must require the recipient to report at least annually.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Note to Applicants: In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications/proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by **July 10, 2009**, and written responses will be posted on EPA Wetland Division’s website at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/>.

Agency Contact

Myra Price

Phone Number: (202) 566-1225

E-mail: Price.Myra@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC)

Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements are applicable to these grants (see 40 CFR 30.54 and 40 CFR 31.45). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology.

Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Wetland Grant Coordinator (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff person.

B. DATA SHARING

All recipients of these assistance agreements will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan.

C. DATA ACCESS AND INFORMATION RELEASE

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-110 has been revised to provide public access to research data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under some circumstances. Data that are (1) first produced in a project that is supported in whole or in part with Federal funds and (2) cited publicly and officially by a Federal agency in support of an action that has the force and effect of law (i.e., a regulation) may be accessed through FOIA. If such data are requested by the public, the EPA must ask for it, and the grantee must submit it, in accordance with A-110 and EPA regulations at 40 C.F.R. 30.36.

D. EXCHANGE NETWORK

EPA, states, territories, and tribes are working together to develop the National Environmental Information Exchange Network, a secure, Internet- and standards-based way to support electronic data reporting, sharing, and integration of both regulatory and non-regulatory environmental data. States, tribes and territories exchanging data with each other or with EPA, should make the Exchange Network and the Agency's connection to it, the Central Data Exchange (CDX), the standard way they exchange data and should phase out any legacy methods they have been using. More information on the Exchange Network is available at www.exchangenetwork.net.

E. WETLANDS MAPPING STANDARD

A "National Wetland Mapping Standard" has recently been developed by a work group of the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC). This work group has provided a national standard for wetland mapping which must be used in all mapping projects that are funded through the federal government. Non-federally funded wetland mapping projects are encouraged to comply with the standard. Wetlands mapped using the standard can be uploaded to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) database to refine the existing wetland data. The National Wetland Mapping Standard can be found at: http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/projects/FGDC-standards-projects/wetlands-mapping/FinalDraft_FGDC_WetlandsMappingStandard_2009-01.pdf

F. INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL

Pursuant to Executive Order 13112 (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>), the recipient of EPA funds and all subcontractors shall monitor the project to insure it does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. If invasive species are detected or populations promoted in any way, the recipient will respond rapidly to control populations in an environmentally sound manner, as approved by the EPA Project Officer.